

APPRAISAL AND RECOMMENDED CHANGES IN LOGISTICS OFFICE FILING SYSTEM

1. There has been no specific assignment of responsibility for maintenance of the files. (Survey Report Recommendation No. 2)

As many as six secretaries and many of the staff members remove material from the files. All of the girls do some filing but none appear to have studied or have a real understanding of the system. Approximately 100 instances of incorrect classification were noted and approximately 20 pieces of correspondence were found to be misfiled.

Recommendation: Fix responsibility for the maintenance of the files and limit file classification, filing and withdrawing to responsible individuals. Assure proper training of responsible filing personnel. NOTE: The Area Records Officer has stated that she proposes to adopt this recommendation starting with the first of the new calendar year.

2. No cross references were made for new material filed in the past year. (Survey Report Recommendation No. 4, and Page 5 Section IV of Exhibit A)

Cross references should be used only when more than one subject is covered in the material being filed, or future reference to the material could logically be requested under more than one subject. Comparatively few pieces of correspondence required cross reference but certainly some of the material filed in the past year should have been cross referenced.

Recommendation: Obtain standard cross reference forms and prepare and file as needed. NOTE: The Area Records Officer has initiated a request for the necessary forms and will start using them the first of the new calendar year.

3. Material was withdrawn from files by secretaries and staff members without inserting charge out cards. (Survey Report Recommendation No. 4, and Page 5 Section VI of Exhibit A)

Charge out cards are an absolute necessity in retaining control of a file, particularly such as this one when material may be withdrawn and held by as many as 15 staff members. Charge out cards also reduce misfiles by assuring that material is refilled in the position from which it was withdrawn.

Recommendation: Prepare and file charge out cards for all material withdrawn from the files.

4. Filing is not done currently.

There was approximately a months accumulation of filing to be done at the time of our review. Certainly this seriously affects required reference service.

Recommendation: File accumulated material daily.

5. Material was filed by subject but without regard to date. (Survey Report Recommendation No. 4, and Page 5 Section V-B of Exhibit A)

This practice slows reference to needed material and if the approximate date is known creates doubt in the mind of the searcher as to whether or not the material was ever filed.

Recommendation: File chronologically within the subject heading.

6. It is a common practice to retain official file copies of material in individual working files while awaiting a reply or further action which may take considerable time.

Withholding material of this type from the file is unfair to the other staff members who may have need to refer to it. Cast doubt on the efficiency of the system because it is usually assumed that the material is misfiled or just cannot be located.

Recommendation: Forward all related correspondence and file copies of complete correspondence to the Communications and Records Section where it will be separated for dispatch and filing. Charge official file copy to individual requesting retention of the file copy awaiting a reply or requiring further action.

7. Related previous correspondence has not been brought forward in filing current material. (Survey Report Recommendation No. 4, and Page 4 Section III-B-2-f of Exhibit A)

Failure to bring forward such correspondence increases the time for current references or may result in incomplete references. This practice may also result in pertinent material being retired prematurely.

Recommendation: Bring forward related material while filing current correspondence.

8. Additional subjects have been added in the file without regard to the basic principles of the system.

The subjects added are usually at the request of some staff member who has little or no knowledge of the system and who will not be required to service future reference request. This reduces the effectiveness of the system since the requestor must rely continuously on his memory of specific folder titles, rather than the file clerks knowledge of the system. The system is sufficiently flexible to provide specific case files as needed but it should be done within the proper subject heading structure and should be done at the discretion of the person responsible for the files.

Recommendation: Add needed additional subject headings in accordance with the system. New secondary headings should be cleared with this office in order to maintain standardization of the over all agency system.

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Approved For Release 2000/08/25 : CIA-RDP70-00211R000200080040-6

9. There was no finding aid established to supplement the system in assuring fast complete reference service. (Survey Report Recommendation No. 9, and Exhibit B, Section II-C-5)

The use of the recommended finding aid is a control measure rather than a substitute for an initial search of the subject file. It is particularly important when a new system is being broken in and in questionable cases serves as an indication that the material actually was or was not filed. It serves in lieu of a cross reference in the subject file in many instances and will locate needed correspondence when the addressee or source is known but the subject is vague or incomplete. The finding media originally recommended was the first copy of the Form 35-1 "File and Routing Slip." This form was to have the file classification indicated on it and be filed by source at the time of the filing of the related correspondence.

Recommendation: Indicate the file classification on the first copy of the Routing Slip, Form 35-1 at the time the correspondence is filed. File the Form 35-1 by source. NOTE: The Area Records Officer has indicated that this original recommendation will be adopted as of the first of the year.

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